

ER 11-9462/a

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1 December 1959

Mr. Arnold Joerns
Arnold Joerns Company
Fontana, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Joerns:

Thank you for your letter of 25 November
to Mr. Dulles.

We appreciate your letting us know your
thoughts on the subject, regarding which your
wrote. You realize, of course, it is one on
which CIA would make no comment.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

Stanley J. Grogan
Assistant to the Director

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November 25, 1959

Mr. Allan Dulles, Chief
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

I had the privilege of seeing last evening a private showing of a Paramount film called "On the Beach" which will be pre-viewed in 18 countries in December.

It seems to me that it should be considered carefully by your department before being permitted to be shown anywhere.

This "horror" picture portrays the extinction of all humans on earth in the year 1964.

The "theory" is that radio-active fallout will kill all human and animal life on earth soon after an atomic war. I doubt if this is scientifically true. In the picture all life has been wiped out except Australia, and the picture gives it to Australia. If this is scientifically untrue the picture, in my opinion, should not be allowed to be shown.

Twenty-five of us of the Illinois Committee of the Chicago Association of Commerce & Industry, and our wives, were privileged to pre-preview the picture in a small room on the 7th floor of the Chicago Theatre by courtesy of Balaban & Katz. We had a jolly dinner together at the Swedish Club before the show. After the show we literally slunk out the most depressed and subdued group I have ever seen.

The staging, photography and acting were superb. Gregory Peck and Fred Astaire were wonderful. It was most convincing.

I have been told that efforts will be made to show the picture in Communist countries. I doubt if this will be allowed. The destruction of morale in the free world would be beyond calculation, in my humble opinion.

Picking the picture apart, of course the first question is, as stated above, is it scientifically a fact that all humans on earth will die of fallout as a result of an atomic war? If not, the picture should not be allowed because most people will believe the picture regardless of what their governments tell them afterwards. It will create fear, confusion, hysteria and distrust throughout the free world, a million times more so than Orson Welles' broadcast some years ago about an invasion by men from Mars.

Another point: There is a beautiful scene of a great crowd in Melbourne (after they have learned their doom), in a public square listening to the eloquent prayers of a Salvation Army General, all believing in their God. Then, later on a similar scene with only about 10% of the people present. Then, toward the end the same scene with nobody present, just old newspapers floating about. The obvious lesson is that God is the bunk. It makes a mockery of all ministries.

Then, another theme, the government gives away sure acting sleeping pills to encourage suicide. A touching part, a young lieutenant and his wife, who are both adorable, have dramatic scenes about whether or not they should murder their baby with the sleeping pills.

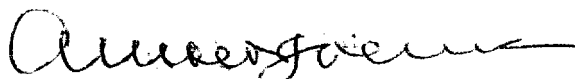
There is a midget automobile race where most of them commit suicide by unheard of reckless driving with any number of thrilling demolitions and cars and drivers burning up. Then the winner, marvelously played by Fred Astaire, locks himself in his own garage, turns on the motor and takes the carbon-monoxide route.

All through there is much drinking and drunkenness, apparently because they know they are doomed. Now I have lived through catastrophes and my experience has been that 99% of people in such a case would look to their God, and not the bottle, and would meet their end, which is inevitable for all of us anyway, with courage and goodness in their hearts.

Lest I be mistaken for a "dry" or a fanatic, I enjoy two cocktails before my evening dinner every day of the year and only get around to going to church about six or eight times a year.

I think the effect of the showing of this picture will greatly handicap the governments of the free world in their current and future negotiations with Russia. It will destroy public confidence in our free-world governments and create a demand for peace at any price.

Respectfully submitted,



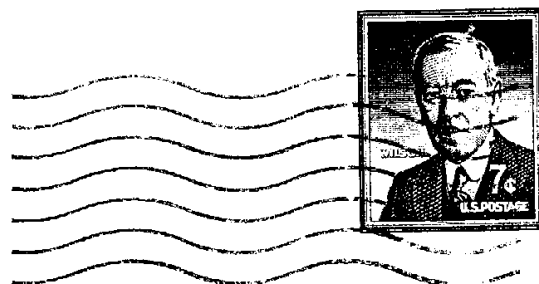
Arnold Joerns

Secretary Nat'l. Security League,
Chicago, 1916 - 1917

Captain, Air Service, U.S. Army, 1917-1918
Member, Military Intelligence Association,
Chicago, 1918 - 1959

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Mr. Allan Dulles, Chief
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.